

Shorebirds of Australia

by Andrew Geering, Lindsay Agnew and Sandra Harding

Publisher: CSIRO Publishing 2007. 256 pages; colour photographs, ISBN 9780643092266. RRP \$49.95

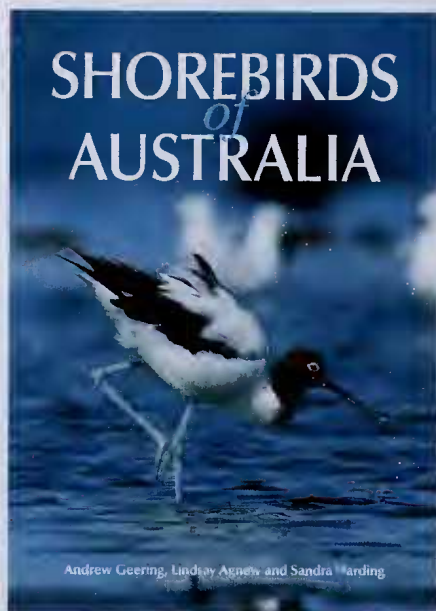
This book brings together the latest information on the shorebirds that occur in Australia. It covers the evolution, ecology and behaviour of the 55 regularly observed species as well as notes on another 23 species of vagrants.

The book itself is divided into seven chapters, each looking at a different facet of the birds' life, from evolutionary history to migration, feeding ecology to plumage and individual species descriptions. The last chapter looks at the current threats to this group of birds across the world and what conservation actions can be undertaken. The chapter on plumage has large diagrams illustrating key features, and a large glossary of topography terms, such as scapulars, remiges and underwing-coverts, that make it much easier to comprehend.

Each species description has a number of features that will aid both the amateur and more seasoned birdwatcher in correctly identifying individuals. These features are Adult breeding and non-breeding plumage, Juvenile plumage, Flight characteristics, Voice, Range, Habits and Similar Species. A number of photos, both on the ground and in flight, add value to the descriptions.

Up-to-date distribution maps also provide much information. Plotted on the maps are 119 sites where internationally significant numbers of one or more species have been sighted. Each site is numbered and a table at the beginning of Chapter 6 names each site, state, significant species and total number of significant species. Roebuck Bay near Broome WA, for instance, is the most important site in terms of significant numbers of species. It has 18 species recorded, followed by Eighty Mile Beach (WA) and SE Gulf of Carpentaria with 16 each. In Victoria, The Shallow Inlet/Sandy Point area has significant numbers of 7 species.

The maps also show breeding localities of such species as Banded Stilt and Red-



necked Avocet, and historical records of Plains Wanderer, Australian Painted Snipe, Hooded Plover and both species of Stone-Curlew.

While there has been much discussion of this book on Birding-Aus, an email forum, about the species that have been included or left out, this book would be a valuable addition to any naturalist's library especially as so many of these species 'look the same', even to the educated eye, in their eclipse plumage.

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